

AMENDMENTS IN THE CLAIMS

1. (previously amended) A method for maintaining confidentiality of personal information during E-commerce transactions comprising the steps of:

compiling a profile of personal information within an electronic depository for at least a first party to an E-commerce transaction;

providing said first party a unique transaction identifier (TID) linked to said profile for use during said E-commerce transaction; and

in response to said first party providing said transaction identifier to a second party to said E-commerce transaction, completing said transaction utilizing said electronic depository without said second party receiving at least a portion of said personal information of said first party; and

wherein, when said transaction requires a transfer of an item from the second party to the first party, said completing step includes:

assigning a security routing identifier (SRID) for utilization by said second party to identify a shipment of said item by a shipping service affiliated with said electronic depository, wherein the shipping service is independent of said second party and is utilized to complete said transfer of said item to an address of said first party, and wherein said SRID is initially provided to the second party, who forwards the item along with said SRID and said TID to the shipping service;

receiving said transaction identifier along with said security routing identifier at said depository from said shipping service; and

forwarding at least an address portion of said profile associated with said TID to said shipping service along with said SRID, wherein said shipping service receives the item from said second party tagged with only said SRID and said TID for identification purposes and subsequently sends said item to said first party utilizing at least said address portion of the profile.

2. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein said first party is a buyer and said second party is a merchant having a web server for initiating E-commerce transactions, and said completing step further includes the step of locating said transaction identifier in said electronic depository.

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3. (previously canceled)

4. (previously amended) The method of Claim 2, wherein said receiving step includes the step of automatically notifying said buyer of a receipt of said transaction information.

5. (previously amended) The method of Claim 2, wherein said product for said transaction is electronic and said receiving step further includes the step of electronically receiving said product at said depository and then transmitting said product to said buyer.

6. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein said step of providing a unique transaction identifier comprises the step of providing a credit card number.

7. (previously amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said second party is provided a unique second-party TID, said method further comprising the steps of completing said E-commerce transaction on a server of said electronic depository wherein said transaction is completed on said server without said first party and said second party receiving any of said personal information of the other party.

8. (previously amended) A client-based method for maintaining confidentiality of personal information during E-commerce transactions comprising the steps of:

creating a profile of personal information within an electronic depository for at least a first party to an E-commerce transaction, wherein said first party is provided a unique transaction identifier (TID) linked to said profile for use during said E-commerce transaction;

enabling said first party to select whether or not to provide said TID in lieu of personal information to said second party; and

in response to said first party providing said transaction identifier to a second party to said E-commerce transaction, forwarding information related to said E-commerce transaction to said electronic depository, wherein said transaction is completed by said electronic depository without said second party receiving any of said personal information.

9. (previously canceled)

10. (previously amended) The method of Claim 9 8, wherein said enabling step further comprises the step of providing a web browser application having a graphical user interface (GUI) on an Internet access system of said client, wherein said GUI provides a plurality of selectable options for said first party including utilizing a transaction identifier to complete said E-commerce transaction.

11. (previously amended) A system for maintaining confidentiality of personal information during E-commerce transactions, said system comprising:

an electronic depository utilized for storing a profile of personal information for at least a first party to an E-commerce transaction;

registration utility affiliated with said depository for assigning said first party a unique transaction identifier (TID) linked to said profile for use during said E-commerce transaction; and

transaction utility affiliated with said depository for completing said E-commerce transactions utilizing said electronic depository in response to said first party providing said transaction identifier to a second party to said E-commerce transaction, wherein said second party receives only a portion of said personal information of said first party required to complete the transaction;

wherein, when said transactions requires a transfer of an item from the second party to the first party, said transaction utility further includes:

means for assigning a security routing identifier (SRID) for utilization by said second party to identify a shipment of said item by a shipping service affiliated with said electronic depository, wherein the shipping service is independent of said second party and is utilized to complete said transfer of said item to an address of said first party, and wherein said SRID is initially provided to the second party, who forwards the item along with said SRID and said TID to the shipping service;

means for receiving said transaction identifier along with said security routing identifier at said depository from said shipping service; and

means for forwarding at least an address portion of said profile associated with said TID to said shipping service along with said SRID, wherein said shipping service receives the item from said second party tagged with only said SRID and said TID for

identification purposes and subsequently sends said item to said first party utilizing at least said address portion of the profile.

12. (original) The system of Claim 11, wherein said first party is a buyer and said second party is a merchant having a web server for initiating E-commerce transactions, and said transaction utility includes means for locating said transaction identifier in said electronic depository.

13. (previously canceled)

14. (previously amended) The system of Claim 12, wherein said receiving means includes means for automatically notifying said buyer party of a receipt of said transaction information.

15. (previously amended) The system of Claim 12, wherein said product for said transaction is electronic and said receiving means further includes electronically receiving said product at said depository and then transmitting said product to said buyer.

16. (original) The system of Claim 11, wherein said registration utility which provides a unique transaction identifier comprises means for providing a credit card number.

17. (original) The system of Claim 12, wherein said second party is provided also has a unique second-party TID, said system further comprising means for completing said E-commerce transaction on a server of said electronic depository wherein said transaction is completed on said server without said first party and said second party receiving any of said personal information of the other party.

18-28. (previously canceled)